

## THE NEW PLAYS

"If" a Melodramatic War-Dream.

BY CHARLES DARNTON

THIS is not a time to take any war play lightly. Yet the audience at the Fulton Theatre last night could easily be forgiven for smiling audibly at "If," the play by Mark Swann, that presented the Japanese as a menace to our country.

"If" may be taken as a warning, but not as a play. While it is like "An Englishman's Boy," seen at the Criterion Theatre some seven years ago, it lacks the dramatic and human qualities of the prophetic drama that came to us from London. Perhaps we need to be awakened and there is no

reason why we should not accept a playwright as a patriot. Say what you will, the wars of the world have been written on paper. We remember the things that have been said and forget the lives that have been lost. That is history in a bombshell. All this is apparently realized by Mr. Swann. But he has achieved more a melodrama designed to reflect possible conditions. So far as the theatre is concerned, he has written a bad play. The idea, he advances is another matter. It is an idea that does not call for comment in this corner of a newspaper. Theatrical claptrap cannot possibly affect the fate of a nation.

"If" is nothing more than a melodramatic war-drama. An old man goes to sleep and you are left to see what passes through his mind. His servant Toko is transformed into a general, who takes possession of the house and forces his daughter to a marriage in order to save her father's life. There is a valiant army officer who loves her, of course, and her young brother, a boy scout, who has rigged up a wireless apparatus on the roof of the house. By this means the boy manages to send word of the Japanese invasion, and a sensible American who has lived in Japan and a rhetorical Congressman have been shot down. A bullet finally hits the boy and the spirit of Lincoln towers above the recumbent figure in the chair. It only remains for the old man to wake up and bestow his blessing upon every one concerned in the strange proceedings.

Meanwhile a Congressman who has merely talked about a post-office has given to his town serves as a target for the playwright's shafts. Caught in war, he offers the excuse that he knows only about politics. In other words, he is a windbag.

There may be a great deal of truth in this point of view, but it doesn't make a play by a long shot.

Forrest Robinson as the father, George Probert as the general, Ben Johnson as a level-headed American business man, Reggie Sheffield as a boy scout, and Bert Lytell as an army officer gave the performance its only interest.

**Barrientos**  
Back in Opera,  
Singing Gilda

By Sylvester Rawling.

MARIA BARRIENTOS returned to the Metropolitan Opera Company's fold last night as Gilda in the first performance this season of "Rigoletto." Her clean-cut, cameo-like coloratura voice held its charm, plus, it seemed to me, a bit of added power, but, alas! still not enough adequately to fill the big auditorium. Moreover, it lacks color. There is at least one young American woman in Mr. Gatti's company whose voice would suit this part admirably; but Miss Barrientos has a reputation on two continents and the American woman has only a local voice, and reputations go far at the Metropolitan Opera House with the subscribers as well as with the management. Unfortunately there are no places in America for operatic try-outs as there are in the boxing ring, eh, Mr. Pollock?

No need to ask who was the Duke in this performance. The passerby on Broadway who saw the long line of patient men and women that stretched around the corner to Seventh Avenue hoping to buy admission tickets knew, at least five hundred of them were disappointed, and the only satisfaction that can be offered them is that more than a thousand would be purchasers of seats failed to get them at the box-office. Only one of the song birds in Mr. Gatti's rich aviary could accomplish this—Carmen! And the inimitable tenor gave of his best, stirring the house to unwonted enthusiasm.

That excellent artist Giuseppe De Luca made Rigoletto seem real and human, singing and acting well. There were De Segura as Sparafuc-

le, and Flora Perini as Maddalena, and a cast that held Mario Mattfeld, Minnie Egner, Emma Bornigia, Angelo Bada, Giulio Rossi, Bernard Begus and Vincenzo Reschiglian, and, over all, Mr. Polacco conducting with sympathetic understanding as well as with authority, a fine performance.

Beryl Rubinstein, pianist, gave his third recital at Aeolian Hall yesterday afternoon. His chief solo number was the sonata opus 2, No. 3, of Beethoven. He was assisted in his concert by a string quartet.

Gerald Maas, Dutch-English cellist, gave a first recital in the Comedy Theatre yesterday afternoon. His chief solo number was Debussy's R minor concerto. He was assisted by Ossip Gabrilowitch, pianist. Among his numbers was one by his accompanist, Miss Anna Zucco, a Ballade et Tarentelle.

## Motion Picture Notes

George Fitzmaurice has finished making "Blind Man's Luck," with Earl Fox and Molly King, at the Astor studios.

Mary Pickford will leave for Los Angeles Saturday. She's going West to make photo plays.

Henry Christen Warnack, a Los Angeles dramatic writer employed on a newspaper, wrote the story of "The Honor System."

A souvenir bearing the words "Stand by Our President" will be given every person who sees "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea" at the Broadway next Wednesday.

Earle Williams in "Arsene Lupin," a photo drama based on Paul Potter's play, will be shown at the Rialto next week.

"The Poor Little Rich Girl," in which Mary Pickford in the star, will have its initial presentation at the Strand March 5.

The next Motion Picture Exhibitors' Ball will be held at Madison Square

Garden on Feb. 15. It promises to be the biggest affair of its kind on record.

In Clara Kimball Young's new apartment are a Russian room, a Louis XV. bedroom and a Chinese boudoir. She has a gown and a dog

to match each room. She often plays her hand-painted ivory piano to amuse her Boston bull terrier.

Herbert Brenon is out of the hospital after four weeks with typhoid fever. He is finishing "The Eternal Sin," in which Florence Reed is starred.

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Queen Anne period, of quiet elegance. Sold separately if desired, Buffet, \$49.50; serving table, \$22.50; china closet, \$38.00; dining table, \$33.00; side chair, \$5.75; arm chair, \$9.50.

**10-pc. Dining Room Suite, \$369.00**  
Solid mahogany, in William and Mary period. Sold separately, as follows: Buffet, \$90.00; china closet, \$68.40; serving table, \$40.50; dining table, \$71.10; side chair, \$15.20; arm chair, \$22.50.

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**4-pc. Bedroom Suite, \$102.50**  
Adam design in antique ivory or walnut finish. Suite with twin beds, \$126.50. Sold separately, as follows: Dresser, \$32.00; chiffonier, \$25.00; dressing table, \$21.50; bed, \$24.00.

**4-pc. Bedroom Suite, \$89.50**  
Ivory enamel or American walnut finish. Sold separately, as follows: Dresser, \$25.00; chiffonier, \$22.50; dressing table, \$19.50; bed, \$22.50.

**7-pc. Bedroom Suite, \$500.00**  
Blue enamel suite in Queen Anne period. Each piece is well made. Sold separately, as follows: Dresser, \$104.50; chiffonier, \$113.50; dressing table, \$87.25; full size bed, \$90.00; chair, \$21.50; rocker, \$21.50; desk, \$61.75.

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